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ABSTRACT

Study of minority groups has been emphasized in the social studies curriculum. Such study needs to move beyond a focus on the minority groups traditionally studied to include other groups. Such minority groups include the Old Order Amish and Hutterites. This essay lists various characteristics of Old Order Amish and Hutterite communities, and suggests that students could benefit from studying these two groups . A bibliography is included. (DB)

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Studying the Old Order Amish and the Hutterites

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Studying the Old Order Amish and the Hutterites

A study of minority groups in the social studies curriculum has been emphasized as being important for several decades. Thus, relevant units in particular have been in evidence pertaining to the study of the Black American, the Mexican American and the American Indian.

There are, no doubt, additional minority groups in American society which need adequate emphasis in the social studies curriculum. These include the Old Order Amish and the Hutterites.

The Old Order Amish

Old Order Amish communities are scattered throughout the United States such as in Pennsylvania, Ohio, Indiana, Missouri, Kansas, and Iowa, among others. Beliefs, values, ideals and ways of living of the Old Order Amish are quite different from other members in American society. The following, among other ways, would generally pertain to normms adhered to by the Old Order Amish:

1. horses and carriages are utilized as means of transportation rather than automobiles.
2. draft horses and horse drawn farm equipment are used in farming as compared to tractors and self-propelled combines with power steering and air-conditioned cabs, plows, disks and other equipment with hydraulic lifts.

3. Women wear single color dresses with long sleeves. The dresses have a high neck line and extend down to the ankles. Prayer caps cover the head of the woman.
4. men wear beards with no mustaches. Hooks and eyes are utilized in outer clothing as compared to buttons. Conservative colors on clothing are in evidence such as black hats and suits for Sunday church services.
5. Amish pupils attend school through the eighth grade level only. These children are usually taught by an Amish man or unmarried woman. The Amish boy tends to learn his future role in life by observing work performed by the father, whereas the girl learns future work roles by observing her mother in the home setting.
6. Amish homes may or may not have indoor plumbing or running water. Telephone service in the home setting is not available. Electricity is not used in Old Order Amish homes. These situations rule out the use of radios and television sets in the Amish home.
7. Amish families meet in member's homes for church services. Church buildings are not a part of their religious beliefs. The German language is used in those services while Pennsylvania Dutch is spoken in the setting.
8. Old Order Amish do not approve of taking pictures with

cameras or having an "outsider" take pictures of their people.

9. Amish young men do not enter military service during times of conscription. Rather, they enter alternative service as conscientious objectors in hospitals, farms and other government approved civilian work.

Thus, the Old Order Amish present a unique, minority group for pupils to study within the framework of social studies units. Learners in the school setting need to develop relevant understandings, skills and attitudes pertaining to the Old Order Amish in society.

The Hutterites

The Hutterites are located in South Dakota, Montana, Washington, and Canada, among other areas. A study of the Hutterites provides pupils in the school and class setting with the content of an addititional unique culture. Hutterites adhere to the following norms:

1. these people live on a commune and have communal ownership of property.
2. all meals are eaten in a communal kitchen. Women on the commune prepare food dishes as well as take care of tasks involving washing and mending of clothes.
3. modern farm machinery is utilized in all farm operations, if adequate money is available.
4. four families, each with their own private living quarters,

live in a large house. No dining facilities are needed in each of these houses.

5. the work supervisor on a commune assigns members to diverse kinds of tasks needing completion.
6. the business manager of a commmune has connections with the economical world outside of local Hutterite communities. Livestock, grain and other products are sold by the Hutterites to outside areas.
7. a Hutterite commune is relatively self-sufficient in producing their own food, clothing, and shelter. In terms of food items, sugar and coffee are examples of items purchased.
8. the minister is the leader of the Hutterite commune.
9. Hutterite men wear beards. Black hats and suits with no ties are wearing apparel of men for Sunday church services. Hutterite women wear dresses with long sleeves that extend to the ankles and have a high neckline. A prayer cap covering the head is worn continually by Hutterite women.
10. participating in military service is looked upon as being evil. Young Hutterite men of draft age during times of conscription perform alternative types of governmental approved service rather than military service.
11. Hutterite children are taught on the commune by licensed,

certified teachers. These teachers must meet norms, as advocated by the Hutterites.

Hutterites strongly emphasize the importance of group goals on commmunes rather than individual endeavors. The contributions of the individual would harmonize with the efforts of the commune as a whole.

Additional Statements on the Old Order Amish and the Hutterites

The Old Order Amish and the Hutterities believe strongly in being able to take care of their own needs. They are exempt from paying money into Social Security funds which is their desire. In return, they expect no Social Security payments during times of old age or disability.

Both groups strongly emphasize taking care of vacuums in everyday living. For example, in an Old Order Amish community, if a barn is destroyed by fire, members will come together and rebuild a new barn in a day or several days. Or, if an Amish farmer is ill and cannot take care of his land, neighbors join together in plowing, disking and seeding the land, or harvesting crops.

In Summary

Pupils with teacher guidance need to experience an ample number of units of study on minority groups. Thus, pupils have opportunities to

contrast their own understandings, skills and attitudes with that of specific minority groups in ongoing units of study.

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